

Statement of Leslie Eisemann
Appropriations Committee
February 23, 2017

Senator Formica, Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee, My name is Leslie Eisemann I'm a resident of Waterbury, a DMHAS client and an advocate for people with mental health conditions and others who are unable to speak for themselves. I myself have never been homeless, but I can empathize with those who have been. They need someone who is willing to stand up and speak for them if they are unable to speak for themselves.

It is absolutely outrageous and ridiculous that the Governor says he wants to end homelessness, yet wants to cut an organization that protects and maintains housing for hundreds of people with mental health conditions. If you approve his budget and make this cut to DMHAS legal services, you would continue to create more homeless people than what we already have, continue to overcrowd our shelters that are already overflowing, you can be responsible for unsightly and costly hospitalizations and emergency room visits and possibly the increase of crime rates. This is asinine. Do not make this cut. This not only affects our veterans, elderly, mothers with children. Is that what you really want for our future? I think not.

I can only speak for myself that for many years CLRP has represented me on many issues, such as advocating for my access to needed treatment and services, but thankfully, none have been housing related. They have been more than instrumental in helping me get to the LOB so I can advocate for myself and the needs of others. I feel that this cut is very wrong. I started out with CLRP with Helen Mehm when I was first starting out as an advocate at my church. Pastor Maner was one of my biggest supporters. Please give this some very serious consideration before making a rash judgment that could have a long term effect that will not be beneficial. It can only hurt more than help.